



National Institute of Justice

S o l i c i t a t i o n

Julie E. Samuels, Acting Director

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Examining Minority Trust and Confidence in the Police

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
February 15, 2001

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531

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For grant and funding information, contact:
Department of Justice Response Center
800-421-6770

Office of Justice Programs
World Wide Web Site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>

National Institute of Justice
World Wide Web Site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

PLEASE NOTE! CHANGES IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Privacy Certificate—requirements have been revised
- Protection of Human Subjects—**new form** (310) required
- National Environmental Policy Act—there is a compliance advisory
- Items 10 (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number) and 12 (Geographic Areas Affected by Project—**new form**) of the SF 424 (Application for Federal Assistance)—there are now full instructions for completing these items.

For complete information about these changes, consult the *Guidelines for Submitting Proposals for National Institute of Justice-Sponsored Research*

Examining Minority Trust and Confidence in the Police

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) serves as the independent research and development arm of the Department of Justice. Since 1995, NIJ, in partnership with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), has instituted a broad research and evaluation agenda focused on transformations taking place in policing. NIJ has awarded research grants as a part of this partnership through financial support

NIJ is streamlining its process to accommodate the volume of proposals anticipated under this and other Crime Act solicitations. Researchers can help in a significant way by sending NIJ a nonbinding letter of intent by **January 15, 2001**. The Institute will use these letters to forecast the numbers of peer panels it needs and to identify conflicts of interest among potential reviewers. There are two ways to send these letters. You can reach NIJ by Internet by sending e-mail to tellnij@ncjrs.org and identifying the solicitation and section(s) you expect to apply for. You can write a letter with the same information to Examining Minority Trust and Confidence in the Police, 810 Seventh Street N.W., Washington, DC 20531.

under the authority of the Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act (Title I) of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (the Crime Act) [see 42 U. S. C. X 3796dd-4, 3793 (c) (11) (B)]. These awards total more than \$47 million for research and evaluation efforts regarding the implementation, consequences, and implications of community-oriented and problem-solving policing. Complete lists of the studies funded in previous years are available from the U. S. Department of Justice Response Center at (800)-421-6770, at (202) 307-1480 and by fax at (202) 616-9294.

II. Background

Despite considerable improvements in police-community relations over the last several decades, trust and confidence in the police continues to be a serious issue in many minority communities. This is, in part, because minority residents frequently believe interactions with police officers are motivated by bias and prejudice. Disrespectful treatment, racial profiling, use of force, and aggressive enforcement initiatives can lead to anger and resentment on the part of many minority community members.

A single high-profile use-of-force incident, such as the shooting of a suspect by police, can fracture whole communities and undo many of the hard-won gains achieved through community policing. High levels of less serious uses of force or other behaviors that

humiliate or embarrass may also may foster a climate of ill will and distrust in the police and government institutions generally. Although either situation may result in a host of negative consequences for police and the communities they serve, the occurrence of a critical incident in a community already highly distrustful of the police is potentially disastrous.

Because of continued concern over police abuse of authority, further research on the nature and extent of the problem is needed, and the identification, documentation, and evaluation of interventions that may mitigate police use of force and incivilities are crucial. Several factors should be considered when proposing to undertake research or conduct an evaluation on the issue, some of which are outlined below.

Limiting abuse of authority, whether that abuse comprises disrespect or use of force, is a complex and multifaceted challenge, with each problem likely requiring different preventive and corrective solutions. Strategies for addressing use-of-force problems must be properly targeted to be effective. The problem of excessive use of force (force used too frequently) may require different interventions than the problem of use of excessive force (too much force used in a given incident). Similarly, interventions designed to reduce the incidence of willful abuses of force (brutality) may need to be different from interventions designed to reduce the incidence of well-intentioned mistakes stemming from individual or organizational deficiencies in judgment, tactics or equipment (unnecessary force).

Effective interventions may need to focus on one or more formal aspects of the police organization (e.g., hiring criteria, recruit training, in-service programs, supervision of field officers, early warning systems, disciplinary mechanisms, operations of internal affairs, specialized units dealing with ethics and integrity, labor unions and civilian oversight mechanisms). Interventions may also need to focus on one or more less formal aspects of the organization (e.g., leadership, officer morale, peer culture and influence, police-community relations, relations with other government agencies and neighborhood environments).

Research shows that police respond punitively (appropriately or not) to suspects who act disrespectfully toward them. Thus, police use of force and disrespect in many instances may be justified by police as a response to actions of citizens, such as verbal insults, passive physical resistance, or assault. A comprehensive strategy to reduce the incidence of disrespect and use of force on the part of both police and the public may need to consider interventions aimed at both law enforcement and the community (e.g., teaching youth how to act in respectful and nonthreatening ways when confronted by police, and teaching police to treat juveniles respectfully and to not react negatively to verbal insults).

Finally, the development of strategies to educate both police and the public regarding the realities of use of force may help dispel misperceptions and reduce police-community tensions. For example, because of media coverage of critical incidents (killings of police) and the popularity of police “street survival” courses and texts, police may tend to overestimate the dangers of their occupation. Such perceptions may lead some officers to use preemptive force when it may be unnecessary or to use greater levels of force where lower levels might suffice.

Similarly, because of widespread media attention community residents may believe that police use force and excessive force much more frequently than they actually do, or they may believe that most instances of police use of force are unjustified and the result of prejudicial behavior. Such perceptions may foster animosity and hinder the development of closer police-community ties. Interventions aimed at dispelling misperceptions may help improve relations between the police and the communities they serve.

III. Areas of Research Required

NIJ will support scientifically sound basic research that demonstrates a strong potential for making policy and programmatic recommendations. NIJ also will support rigorous evaluations of programs designed to reduce the incidence of use of force and incivilities that have implications for national replication. Areas of research and evaluation interest include, but are not limited to:

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1. Determining the nature and extent of police behaviors that humiliate, embarrass or physically abuse, and the effects of these behaviors on public attitudes—particularly those of minorities and youths—toward the police.
 2. How perceptions and stereotypes of police, minorities, and youths are formed, how they influence police-public interactions, and how they might be dispelled.
 3. The relationship of officer approach, tone of voice, level of respect, and suspect demeanor to use of force and incivilities.
 4. The effects of “aggressive” enforcement efforts (e.g., zero tolerance) and specialized street units on community opinions of the police.
 5. The impact of various methods and/or types of training (e.g., use of force, verbal tactics, mediation), types of accountability systems (e.g., supervision, early warning systems, peer review, complaint systems), and policies (e.g., mandatory use of force reporting) on the incidence of use of force and behaviors that humiliate and embarrass.
 6. The role of leadership (e.g., chiefs, commanders) in managing abuses of authority in the field.
 7. The effects of community education programs on the incidence of use of force, incivilities, and attitudes toward police (e.g., teaching youth to interact with police in nonthreatening and polite ways when stopped by police; educating the public about the realities of police work, such as the risks officers face and the reasons for the approaches they take).
- Assurances
 - Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
 - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
 - Budget Detail Worksheet
 - Budget Narrative
 - Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
 - Names and affiliations of all key persons from applicant and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation (if any), department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, and fax
 - Proposal abstract
 - Table of contents
 - Program narrative or technical proposal
 - **Privacy certificate - REVISED**
 - **Form 310 (Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/ Certification/ Declaration) - NEW FORM**
 - **Environmental Assessment (if required) - NEW**
 - References
 - Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project
 - Résumés
 - Appendixes, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications])

IV. How to Apply

Those interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and submit related required documents. (See below for how to obtain application forms and guides for completing proposals.) Applicants must include the following information/forms to qualify for consideration:

- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- **Geographic Areas Affected Worksheet - NEW FORM**

Confidentiality of information and human subjects protection. NIJ has adopted new policies and procedures regarding the confidentiality of information and human subjects protection. Please see the *Guidelines for Submitting Proposals for National Institute of Justice-Sponsored Research* for details on the new requirements.

Proposal abstract. The proposal abstract, when read separately from the rest of the application, is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants must concisely describe the research goals and objectives, research

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design, and methods for achieving the goals and objectives. Summaries of past accomplishments are to be avoided, and proprietary/confidential information is not to be included. Length is not to exceed 400 words. Use the following two headers:

Project Goals and Objectives:

Proposed Research Design and Methodology:

Page limit. The number of pages in the “Program Narrative” part of the proposal must not exceed 30 (double-spaced pages), no matter the amount of funding requested.

Due date. Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on **February 15, 2001**. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

Award period. In general, NIJ limits its grants and cooperative agreements to a maximum period of 24 months. However, longer budget periods may be considered.

Number of awards. NIJ anticipates supporting up to 6 grants under this solicitation.

Award amount. Awards totaling \$1,000,000 will be made available for this NIJ solicitation.

Applying. Two packets need to be obtained: (1) application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and (2) guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients). To receive them, applicants can:

- Access the Justice Information Center on the Web: <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#nij> or the NIJ Web site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>

These Web sites offer the NIJ application forms and guidelines as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.

- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the National Criminal Justice

Reference Service at 800–851–3420 or from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800–421–6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area, at 202–307–1480).

- Request copies by fax. Call 800–851–3420 and select option 1, then option 1 again for NIJ. Code is 1023.

Guidance and information. Applicants who wish to receive additional guidance and information may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800–421–6770. Center staff can provide assistance or refer applicants to an appropriate NIJ professional. Applicants may, for example, wish to discuss their prospective research topics with the NIJ professional staff.

Send 10 copies of the completed applications to:

Examining Minority Trust and Confidence in the Police
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

SL 000448

For more information on the National Institute of Justice, please contact:

National Criminal Justice Reference Service

Box 6000
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e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

You can view or obtain an electronic version of this document from
the NCJRS Justice Information Center web site (<http://www.ncjrs.org>) or the NIJ web site
(<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>).

If you have any questions, call or e-mail NCJRS.